upon their perception of the comparative advantages in different situations, including rural and backward areas.

Wakf Properties

*312. KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the Wakf properties are being illegally sold and transferred throughout the country; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to save the Wakf properties?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The Government have no information regarding illegal sale or transfer of Wakf properties except in respect of West Bengal. The Government of West Bengal have confirmed the receipt of complaints regarding mismanagement of Wakf properties and institution of a departmental enquiry to look into them. But the report of the departmental enquiry has not been received although there have been references in the Press about such a report and discussion of the matter in the State Legislative Assembly.

(b) Safeguards have been provided in the Wakf Act, 1995 to save Wakf properties from illegal sale/ transfer, vide Sections 51 and 52 of the said Act.

Monitoring of Foreign Aircrafts

*313. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Director General of Civil Aviation had been asked to strictly monitor the country's air space to prevent entry of foreign aircraft, violating accepted international norms and threatening the country's security;

(b) if so, whether the Government are aware of the fact that in June, 1996, two Pakistani Planes had entered in a very low range into Indian territory (Kargil area of Jammu and Kashmir) for the preparation of maps of Indian territory; and

(c) if so, the details of the protest made from Indian side and the response from Pakistan thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Privatisation of Postal Services

*314. SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any proposal is under consideration of the Government for privatisation of postal services as reported in the 'Economic Times' dated July 2, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of private agencies proposed to be licenced for the purpose; and

(d) which type of postal services are proposed to be assigned to these agencies?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : As mentioned briefly in the news items in Economic Times dated the 2nd July, 1996 the Department of Post, in order to provide basic postal facility like sale of stamps and stationery extensively, has been allowing licensed agents to operate under specified terms and conditions.

The following agency systems are presently in operation :

Licenced Postal Agency : This scheme, in operation since 1985, allows licensed agents to sell stamps and stationery and book registered articles. The agent is paid a percentage commission on the amount of stamps and stationery sold, and commission per registered article booked.

Keeping in view the staff opposition to the scheme, no new licence under this scheme is being issued since 1987. However, the agents given licences before the scheme was held in abeyance continue to operate.

Licenced Stamp Vendor: This scheme, introduced in 1969, was initially for headquarter towns of Heads of Postal Circles, and since 1983, is is extended to all areas. The scheme permits any individual, firm or society to take an agency for sale of stamps and stationery. STD/ISD/PCO booth holders are also eligible for this scheme.

Licence under this scheme is issued by the Head of Postal Division, subject to fulfilment of prescribed conditions. No Target is set for this purpose.

Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana : This scheme, introduced in 1995, has been devised to provide basic postal services in areas not having such services and justifying opening of a post office. In this scheme, the Gram Panchayat of the Village where post office is justified is allowed to set up Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendra to provide sale of stamps and stationery, booking of registered articles, delivery of unaccountable articles in the village, and facility for small savings schemes.

A target of 250 Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras has been set for the year 1996-97.

Abolition of Child Labour

*315. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether despite constitutional provisions and fresh emphasis on abolition of child labour, they continue to be employed in hazardous industries of the country;